BOB NEATE
No17. MAY '81

THE CROSBY VOICE

NEWSLETTER OF THE VICTORIAN BING CROSBY SOCIETY
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Hello again!

Here we are again with our second major newsletter for 1981. I hope that the year is progressing well for you.

Certainly things are hectic at the Machliss household, not the least reason being that we have sold our house and will shortly be shifting into a rented property for several months until we find a new house to purchase. Obviously, suitable room for a growing record collection is the major prerequisite.

For the next few weeks therefore, could all members who normally pick up and deliver cassettes at my home please note that the tape library will operate on a mailing-only basis.

Also, could those members who still write to our home address please send all mail to the club's address. i.e. P.O. Box 422, South Melbourne, Victoria, Australia 3205.

I'm sure that everyone will be as delighted as I am that our irrepressible Treasurer Thelma Wood is making an excellent recovery from her illness; so much so in fact, that she was able to attend our last function on March 30th. More about that in 'Past Functions'. Beaut to see you looking so well, Thel.

Several items of interest in our photo pages this issue. Thanks to member Clem Parkinson we are able to reproduce a rare 1952 article on Bing from 'People' magazine. The fuzziness you see in several places is due to water staining which unfortunately we couldn't quite remove but we felt that the magazine was rare enough to warrent inclusion none-the-less.

Also included are a couple of pages from a 1965 edition of TV Week (when it was still published in pocket-size format) on Bing's almost forgotten weekly TV series. Although the series was shown here, it was not a success and was in fact, cancelled at the end of the first season.

A couple of interesting new LP's are written up in this issue. On page 27, we feature the cover of a new 2-LP set from Japan which features several Decca tracks never

previously reissued on LP or if they have been, on long-unavailable discs.

I'd like to take this opportunity to issue an apology to American members who, due to the Qantas strike earlier in the year, missed out on bidding on the auctions in our last issue and also buying tickets for our special raffle. The reason that your magazines were so late is that they were mailed in bulk to our U.S. representative Richard Pearson for distribution at local postage rates but due to the strike took several weeks instead of ten days to arrive! Had there been no holdups, you would have received the newsletters well inside the deadlines. Ah well, life wasn't meant to be easy.

Enough of this waffling; onto Future Functions! And our next meeting should be a night to remember.

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FUTURE FUNCTIONS

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MONDAY, MAY 18TH - FILM EVENING

"THE BIG BROADCAST OF 1932"

At last, the film that every Crosby buff has been asking us to screen. Bing's first starring role in a feature movie and we now have the complete print to show. Some 18 months back we showed the musical highlights of the film (minus Bing's version of "Here Lies Love") but this version has all the songs and all the dialogue.

In "The Big Broadcast" ("of 1932" never actually belonged in the title) Bing plays a radio crooner with a complicated love life that is threatening his career. The script is in fact very good, having been adapted from a play of the period "Wild Waves" (airwaves) and Bing sings 'Please', 'Dinah' and as mentioned above, 'Here lies love'.

Guest stars include Kate Smith, The Mills Brothers, Vincent Lopez and his Orchestra, The Boswell Sisters, Cab Calloway, and Burns and Allen (who run the radio station!).

Supporting feature:

"JUST IMAGINE" (1930)

The was almost certainly a first for Hollywood (and just possible a 'last'). It's a Science Fiction Musical and is set in New York in 1980. The leads are played by John Garrick, Maureen O'Sullivan, El Brendel and Kenneth Thomson. Amongst the forcasts the film makes are that in 1980 - people have serial numbers, not names; Marriages are all arranged by the courts; Prohibition is still an issue; men's clothes have but one pocket: on the hip! Songs are by the famous writing team of the day, DeSilva Brown and Henderson.

Venue is the theatrette of the Mobil Building is South Melbourne and starting time is 7.30 P.M. SHARP.

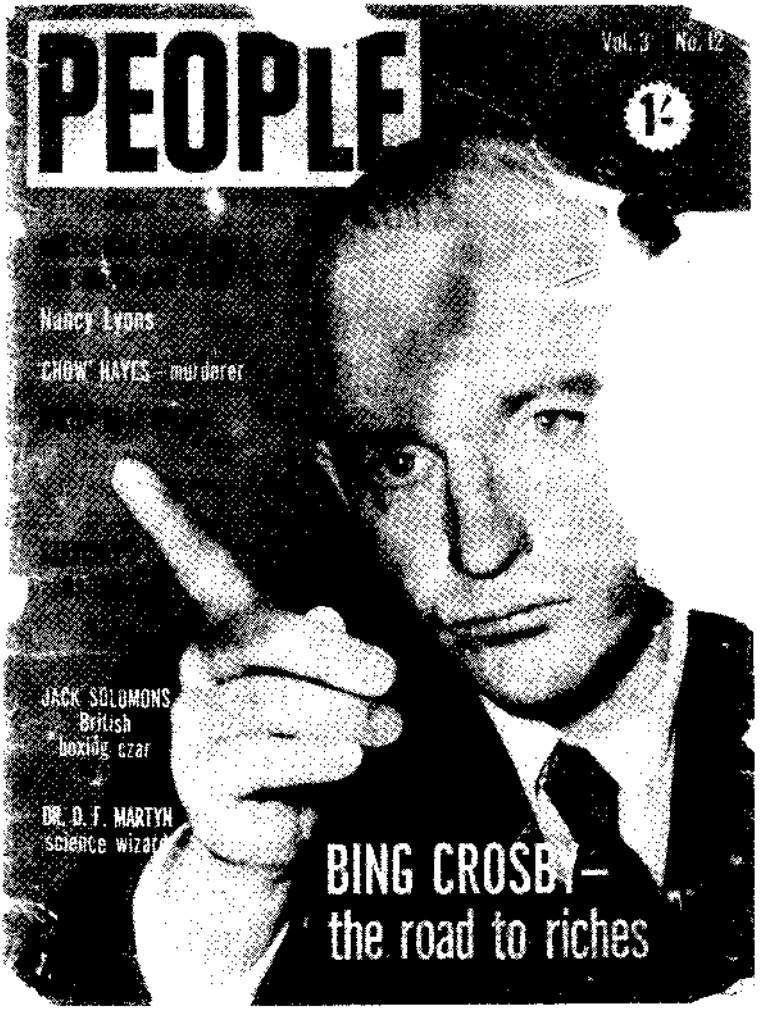
Perhaps it would be well to repeat that. 7.30 p.m. SHARP. Not 7.35 pm, 7.40 pm or even 7.31 pm. 7.30 pm SHARP!

Entry:
Members: $2.00
Families: $5.00
Pensioners and Junior Members: $1.00
Non-Members: $4.00

MONDAY JULY 6TH - VIDEO EVENING

At our last meeting (March 30th) we handed round a list of video programmes available and asked members present to mark those that they would prefer to see. Amongst the most popular were Bing's 1977 concert at Oslo on the way to England for his final live performances, Bing's 1975 Parkinson interview and his 50th anniversary show. Since then, we have also learned of the availability of the TV special "Bing Crosby - His life and legend", so the programme will be made up of a selection of the above. We will be hiring a large-screen video projector for the night so everyone should be able to see easily.

More details on this night as the date approaches. But make a note of it now. Most of the above programmes have not been seen for some time.


PEOPLE
Vol. 3 No. 12
1/-
Nancy Lyons
CHOW HAYES – murderer
JACK SOLOMONS
British
boxing czar
DR. D. F. MARTYN
science wizard
BING CROSBY –
the road to riches

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PAST FUNCTIONS

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MONDAY FEBRUARY 16th - FILM EVENING

1981 got off to a good start when more than 70 members turned up for our first function of the year.

Our double feature evening presented Bing in fine 1939 voice starring in 'East Side of Heaven' plus Bob Hope in his first feature movie 'Big Broadcast of 1938'.

A few technical problems including a film break meant that the evening did not end until nearly 11.00 p.m. causing the security guards at Mobil a couple of problems as we are meant to vacate the hall by 10.30.

As to the film content of the evening, 'East Side of Heaven' was well received but most present agreed that the Hope movie had dated very badly. Even W.C. Fields wasn't at his best and the movie was only saved by Bob and Shirley Ross's famous duet on 'Thanks for the memory'.

Tickets for the framed record stamper donated by Edna Hyde went on sale for the first time and sold extremely well. Obviously, this was an item that many members would like to see hanging on their loungeroom wall.

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MONDAY MARCH 30th - MUSIC & FILM EVENING

Despite the extremely poor weather, around 50 members turned up for our second function of the year.

The first half of the evening featured a series of short films of interest starring such identities as Ruth Etting, Ethel Merman, Fats Waller, Benny Goodman and Bing.

After interval, the draw for the framed record stamper took place and a very happy Noel Lambden carried home a unique and valuable item to add to his collection.

Bill Bennett then presented the music portion of the evening featuring a quiz in which members had to guess the names of various artists accompanying Bing. Not too many experts present that evening! The meeting finished at 10.30.

However, no report on the night would be complete without mentioning the surprise appearance of Thelma Wood who came in on Frank's arm. Thelma had been given a 'night off' by her hospital and she was given a rousing welcome by all present. In a short speech, Thel thanked all those people who had sent her cards and letters (including the members who attended our February 16th meeting and had signed a giant 'get well' card) and it's clear that we'll be seeing her back on deck soon.

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THE KEITH G. HYDE BEQUEST - TAPING NOW VIRTUALLY FINISHED

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The Kraft Music Hall material from the tapes donated by Edna Hyde has now all been transferred to cassette - a total of 22 C120 tapes in all. The first 12 tapes feature songs only from shows of the late 30's and early 40's while the last 10 feature complete programmes from the early 1940's - 4 shows to a tape.

Still remaining to be taped are a handful of miscellaneous programmes from the 40's and 50's - mostly one-off specials for charities, etc. These should occupy a further two cassettes at the most and will be completely within the next few weeks.

As yet we have not decided whether to transfer the complete film soundtracks to cassette as demand for this material has been minimal. However, the reel to reel version of the the soundtracks is available for any member who requires it.

I'm happy to say that demand for the KMH material has been strong however and most of the tapes are out most of the time.

If you wish to borrow these cassettes, please use the standard club cassette borrowing form (copies available on request). The tapes are identified KHB 1, KHB 2, KHB 3, etc and you <u>must</u> list four tapes by number.

BING CROSBY HAS

● BING with his TV family. From left Janice, 11, Ellie, his wife, and Joyce, 16.

ANOTHER WIFE!

● Beverly Garland, Bing's TV wife.

BING CROSBY has ANOTHER wife—and he's going back to work.

And as he's 60, multimillionaire with thriving business interests, happily married with a family, people are asking . . . WHY?

For Bing has agreed, for the first time in his career, to a weekly TV series, a family show with lovely Beverly Garland as Mrs. Bing Collins, his wife, Carol Faylen as their 16-year-old daughter Joyce, and Diane Sherry as their 11-year-old daughter Janice. Living with the family is Bing Collins's wartime buddy Willie (played by comedian Frank McHugh) who dropped in for a meal and just hasn't left.

Why face the high pressure and grind of a weekly show, particularly when for years you have worried about the dangers of over-exposure?

Says Bing: "I liked what they showed me and thought I'd take a crack at it."

The fact is that Bing was bored. His holdings in the orange-juice business, real estate, oil and Bing Crosby Productions were all in good hands, needed little attention from him. He'd had all the golf and fishing he wanted.

Agents and friends had been trying for years to persuade Bing to take on a weekly TV show. His answer was that he didn't mind an occasional appearance but that was all.

"Suppose I made 52 movies a year? Who'd come to watch me after the fifth or sixth? They'd get fed up with my voice, my kisser, every aspect of me. No."

Then one of Bing's agents, Meta Rosenberg, took over a proposition for Bing to make several specials. Her viewpoint: There were already so many specials on TV that there was nothing very special about them.

"What would be special is if we could ever talk Bing into doing a weekly series," she said.

"After all, good motion-picture roles for Bing are hard to come by, but he's still a fine actor in good physical condition with an excellent mind and great stores of energy."

So she went to Bing and put up the proposition again, pointing out that stars such as Lucille Ball, Red Skelton and Donna Reed had all been appearing regularly on TV for years.

Bing said he would try it, if he liked the format of the shows they planned.

The Bing Collins family was the result. Bing, as Bing Collins, is an engineer who is also consultant to a nearby university. As a father he is sensible and witty. It's a family with no zany relationships — just a group of happy people whose life can be fun.

He sings in each show, gives the youngsters sound advice.

For instance, when elder daughter Joyce pleads for an equal-terms relationship with her parents he explains: "You want to be us. And you can't. And you *force* us into trying to be you. And *we* can't. We're not meant to be *friends*, baby. I'm your father. And you're my kid. And if that's an outmoded parent-child relationship I'm all for it."

It's quality with a pedigree. Most half-hour TV shows are budgeted at around 50,000 to 60,000 dol. (£22,300 to £26,700) a program. The Bing Crosby Show is closer to 70,000 dol. (£31,250). Bing's take from this package, which he owns completely, is from 15,000 to 20,000 dol. (£4700 to £8930) a week.

It hits the screen this month in the U.S. #

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ANNOUNCING A NEW SERVICE FOR MEMBERS - A CLUB BOOK LIBRARY

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We are indebted to member Brian Clarke of Eltham for suggesting this idea. With all the books on Bing that are available at present, it makes a lot of sense to make them available to members!

And so we are delighted to announce that, available immediately, the following books may be borrowed by members.

1. CALL ME LUCKY. Bing's own autobiography published back in 1953. Thanks to member Greg Young who was able to supply us with this one.

2. BING. Bing's 'official' biography published in 1975 and written by Charles Thompson, writer and researcher for the 14 week BBC radio series on Bing.

3. THE FILMS OF BING CROSBY. The 1977 publication which features every one of Bing's film appearances and is illustrated with hundred of photographs.

4. THE CROSBY YEARS. The most recent book on Bing by English record producer Ken Barnes. Certainly one of the most valuable books on Bing even published.

5. THE ONE AND ONLY BING. Published shortly after Bing's death, this is one of the many 'tribute' books and was written by American Bob Thomas. Thanks to member Ron Were for providing this copy.

And that's just the start. As copies of old books turn up and new books appear, they will be added to the library. If you have any books that you would careto donate or sell to the Club, we would be happy to hear from you. Also, if you see any old Crosby books for sale, please buy them for us and the Club will re-imburse you completely.

HOW TO BORROW BOOKS

. There will be a charge of $1.00 per book fee levied to help offset the cost of us purchasing the books, plus mailing costs both ways. As yet, we don't know what these costs will be so for your first order, please enclose $1 borrowing payment.

- All applications are to be made in writing only and applications will be dealt with in order of arrival.

- Please list two books in order of preference. You will be sent whichever of the two is available at the time of receipt of the letter although we will endeavour to send your first preference.

- Books are loaned for a maximum of two weeks (not including mailing times). Please respect this time limit as others are waiting for the book you have.

- Books must be sucurely packed for transit. Padded post office bags are ideal.

- Unfortunately, this service is only available at present for Australian members.

We haven't bothered introducing a special borrowing form for the Book Library at this time. An ordinary letter will suffice for requests for books.

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LETTERS

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From Al Sutton, California.

We all envy you the fact that geography works in your favour and permits rather significant numbers to gather at regular intervals. Regional or local meetings are almost out of the question hereon the west coast, due to the size of the country and the distance between individual members. So, of course, we follow the Australian news with a great deal of interest and genuine envy.

From Tim Morgereth, Maryland.

Recently, Ken Twiss of the Bing Crosby Historical Society appointed me assistant co-ordinator of the Tacoma birthplace project. At stake is the possible establishment of a state and possibly federal museum and shrine to Bing. We need the support, through letters, of all of the "Crosbyites" down under forming a sort of 'invisible network' of kindred spirits. I'm sure that Bing is worth to all, the price of a postage stamp! If you could pass

this message on by means of your newsletter, I and the BCHS would be deeply in your debt. (Glad to help, Tim. Members please address their letters of support to Tim Morgereth, 1906 Codd, Ave, Baltimore, Maryland 21222, USA. BM)

From David Duncan, Pymble, NSW.
As I wrote earlier, I have started at Crosb Club at our school. You may be surpised to know that our club now has some forty members, and even though I'm sure a lot of people joined for a joke, I have accomplished what I intended to, as everybody is talking about Bing Crosby at school now. I've even earned the name 'Bing' from the boys and masters. (Great to hear David. Keep up the good work. BM)

From Paul Purtell, Mordialloc, Vic.
I must applaud Edna Hyde's generous donation of Keith's massive collection of tapes. Such an action will ensure that Keith's memory will always live on.

From Ken Twiss, Tacoma, USA.
Our meeting this year will be May 1 and 2. Friday night and Saturday afternoon will be devoted to showing movies and video programmes. Saturday night we will have the banquest and entertainment. We have a good producer this year and he is trying to attract 500 people.
Father Dussault (of Gonzaga University) has set the dedication of the statue of Bing for May 3rd. Mary Rose Pool, Bing's sister will unveil the statue. Phil Harris has promised to be there along with Alice Faye. Gordon Atkinson will be M.C. and Rich Little will also be there. There will be a reception in the Crosby library in the evening.

(Re. the above unveiling, our society received an invitation from Father Dussault asking if we would like to attend. Unfortunately, distance (and therefore cost) makes our responding to any such invitations an impossibility. Nonetheless, we were touched to receive the invitation and quickly penned a reply to Fr. Dussault. Our thanks to Ken Twiss who is undoubted responsible for Gonzaga University even being aware of our existence! BM)

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RICHARD PEARSON'S REPORT

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On March 24th, we had a little get together. A total of 4 Crosby fans attended - myself, Howard Daniel, Wig Wiggins and special guest Fernando Caldas of Brasilia. (A new member. BM) Also in attendance were Barbara Dyer of England and a couple of our local D.C. Chapter of the International Sinatra Society members - Virginia Botelis and Virginia and John Schaffer.

A tape of Bing's early 1930's recordings was played and no-one objected to the vintage sound of Crosby when his pipes were at their best.

The coffee table was spread with Crosby memorabilia (including an autographed Palladium program obtained by Barbera when she saw Bing at the Palladium just a few days before his death). Also, a Uris Theatre programme was passed around. I had the good fortune of picking one up when I attended one of Bing's Broadway concerts back in 1976.

Probably the single most talked about item was the new Crosby chronology by John Bassett and Bert Bishop which was recently published in England. Everyone was most impressed by how well laid out the book was. Although compact, it contains both a recording date chronology and alphabetical chronology. (Order your copy from England. Cost is three pounds 50 p including postage. Write to J. Joyce, John Joyce and Son, Saltmeadows Rd, Gateshead, Tyne and Wear, NE 8 3 AH, England. BM)

Howard Daniel brought along a most unusual item - a Bing Crosby pillow case! It actually features a black and white reproduction of Bing's face! Howard is sure that it is extremely old and is quite proud of it.

All in all, we had a great time and I think we will be having more meetings like this in future.

(If anyone would like to write to Richard, his address is PO Box 1481, Arlington, Virginia, 22210. USA. BM)

(FROM "PEOPLE", AUGUST 1952)

THE WAY UP

[illegible]

[illegible]

[illegible]

[illegible]

BING_

A RELAXED THROAT, A CASUAL MANNER

B[illegible] has made a paying business [illegible] casual. He likes to refer to [illegible] "the world's laziest man," and [illegible], unworried, indolent manner [illegible] to convince many people of it.

But [illegible] get to be the world's highest [illegible] earner, one of the most popular [illegible] in the world, an Academy Award [illegible], and a business tycoon [illegible] just by being lazy, or even lucky. [illegible] hard work and shrewdness have [illegible] too. Bing's genius is that he [illegible] this fact and makes it look as if [illegible] has just dropped into the lap of [illegible] in the world.

Even in his [illegible] seem to have to try. He has [illegible] "throw-it away" style the [illegible]. His voice is true and pleasant [illegible] it beloved is its warm [illegible] and above all its ease and [illegible].

Bing sings like [illegible] sing under the shower [illegible].

Betty Hutton, who [illegible] she's [illegible] every song she sings [illegible] with amazement the story of the [illegible] recorded with Crosby in Here [illegible] World. "We walk on the recording stage at Paramount," says Betty. "I'm as [illegible] a witch at Macbeth's last night. [illegible] musical director is jumping around [illegible] dodging bricks. We're about to do our first song together and we both know the director wants it to be good.

"So what happens? In walks Crosby, wearing something that passes for a sweatshirt [illegible] perched on the back of his head and the inevitable pipe in his mouth. He looks like a guy who is starting a three-weeks' vacation on pay. The minute before you put a song on celluloid is comparable to zero hour in the front lines. You know you're going to muff the words or get off key or [illegible] or something.

"I'm dying, just watching Bing. He still has his pipe in his mouth two seconds before the orchestra gives us our cue. When it comes the pipe is in his hand and he gives with that singing which has enabled juke-box owners to buy mansions. Oddly, although I'm standing right beside him, I can hardly hear his voice. Me, I'm taking the [illegible] off giving everything I have to the piece. Then we finish, there's a marked note of complacency in his manner. This highly-touted character is going to learn a thing or two from Betty Hutton.

"So we listen to the playback. It's sensational, not my part, but Crosby's. Here I thought he was whispering into the mike. Instead, it sounds like Lawrence Tibbett on an [illegible] stomach."

That's Crosby. He saunters through life, making his dreams come true with an easy magic that makes it seem that anyone could do the trick.

Even Bing's method of dressing fits in with his casual air. Realising early in his career that he couldn't be the debonair tailor's dummy type, he made a virtue of necessity and wore the sloppy, easy clothes that anyway he preferred to formal ones. He's known now as Hollywood's worst dressed man—but with affection, not criticism.

He usually wears slacks and a gay sports shirt, which he rarely tucks into his trousers. His gaudy shirts have been a standing joke for years. In fact, Bing is color-blind and is genuinely surprised to hear that they aren't a sober grey. He has a favorite, battered felt hat, which he wears almost all the time, even when making recordings.

Bing's hair started to recede early in life and for the movies he has to wear a hairpiece. But he is quite unembarrassed about his baldness and has never tried to keep it a secret. Whenever possible, he goes without the toupee, which he says is uncomfortable. He's completely unconcerned when other comedians joke about it.

He smokes his pipe incessantly, removing it from his mouth—as Betty Hutton noticed—only just in time to record a song. When a friend warned him that his voice might ultimately be injured by his constant smoking, Bing answered indifferently, "Oh, the kind of singing I do, you can't hurt your voice."

Bing sings because he loves to sing. But he is honestly unimpressed by his own voice. Sometimes people suspect his modesty of being affectation, a sort of inverted conceit. But [illegible] surprised that people like [illegible] described as "just an [illegible] throat."

His horror of pretension

And he wasn't [illegible] a big American magazine [illegible] wasn't what it used [illegible] comment. "I never [illegible] first place."

Though time has made it clear that everyone likes almost everything [illegible] does, Bing remains unconvinced. He has a horror of pretension, of phoniness, of appearing to be over-confident. So it is a hard job for his advisers to make him attempt anything new in the entertainment field—though when he finally does, it invariably succeeds.

The president of Decca Records, a great friend of Bing's, has to badger him every time he wants him to try a new type of song. When the president asked him to record *Silent Night* and *Adeste Fideles*, Bing laughed him to scorn. "Who do you think I am?" he inquired. "Lily Pons?" He was finally persuaded to make the recordings by the suggestion that he turn over his royalties to charity. To date some 36 charities have benefited from the sale of nearly 2-million impressions.

Bing's voice is almost completely untrained. As a boy, he had a few voice lessons, but played truant so often to play baseball that he and his singing teacher called it a day by mutual consent. He never worries about intonation, breathing, or diaphragmatic control. But his ear is unerring and many opera

Before the microphone or camera, Bing is completely at ease—and dresses to suit his nonchalant manner. He acts unaffectedly like a man who has nothing much either to lose or gain.

ADD UP TO BIG BUSINESS

singers have publicly voiced their envy and admiration for his ability to stay on the pitch. He has made many a song into a hit just by singing it on his radio show.

Several years ago, his son Gary conceived a liking for an obscure number called *Little Sir Echo*, and pestered his father until he broadcast it. In a matter of days the song had soared to the top of the hit parade.

Bing's lazy, amiable charm is hard to reconcile with his well-ordered, successful life. His old friends are often amazed, thinking of his present eminence, to remember his irresponsible early life. In the first part of his career, he gave every indication of turning into a charming failure.

Harry Lillis Crosby was born 48 years ago in Washington, the fourth of seven children. Early in his life he acquired his nickname, Bing, from his addiction to a comic strip of the time called *The Bingville Bugle*. His parents wanted him to be a lawyer, and Bing himself was at first agreeable. He became a lawyer's clerk and attended law classes at Gonzaga College. But there he met a fellow called Al Rinker and with him joined an amateur six-piece band.

Bing played the trap-drums and sang vocals; Al Rinker was pianist and leader. It wasn't long before Bing and Al realised that the law was going to lose two promising recruits. Music was to be their career.

The elder Crosbys accepted their son's decision with resignation [illegible] for this that he has [illegible] will never interfere in their choice of a career. "My parents must have been disappointed when I gave up the law," he says. "But they let me do what I wanted. A good thing, too—where would I be if I'd become a lawyer?"

So Bing and Al [illegible] left the law school, bought an ancient Ford for about £10, and hit the road. They'd evolved a routine of hot fast numbers, with Rinker playing the piano and singing tenor to Bing's baritone. They billed themselves as *Two Boys And A Piano*. In Tacoma, they made £10 in a week's engagement at a movie theatre. In Portland and San Francisco they worked in speakeasies. They were evolving a style that was to have a far-reaching influence on American popular music. One day, as they bounced along in their jalopy, Bing began to fit the rhythm of a song he was singing to the clatter of the exhaust. Rinker joined in—and though they didn't realise it, the idiom of Paul Whiteman's *Rhythm Boys* had been born.

But they didn't actually meet Whiteman until they'd been touring the West Coast for a year. Then he heard their act, was impressed, and asked them to join his company. They toured most of America with Whiteman, finally reaching New York, where their reception was poor until Whiteman added a third man, Harry Barris, to the *Rhythm Boys*. Barris later composed *I Surrender, Dear* and other Crosby specialties. The trio became popular and famous. Barris and Rinker played only piano; Bing provided the rhythm background with a cymbal and drumstick, and of course sang the vocals.

Today, some of their recordings—*Mississippi Mud*, *From Monday On*, and others—are collector's items, highly prized by amateurs of true jazz.

This was a carefree, wild-oat period of Bing's life. He had no responsibilities, he was doing the work he liked, and having a great time. The *Rhythm Boys* went on a riotous vaudeville tour on which—free from Whiteman's careful supervision—they enjoyed a strenuous social program.

"I suppose you left a trail of broken hearts across the country?" an interviewer asked Bing when they returned.

"No—a trail of broken bottles," corrected Bing candidly.

They had missed one booking completely, through taking a train in the wrong direction in an alcoholic haze. On another occasion, they had got into a crooked dice game and been cleaned out so thoroughly that they couldn't even pay their baggage charges. They had to do their act next day without their music, properties or scenery.

Whiteman, when the *Rhythm Boys* returned, took them to Hollywood with him to appear with him in *The King Of Jazz*. This was in 1930. Bing was to sing a solo—but it was only through a hard-won "leave of absence" from a jail sentence that he appeared in the picture at all. While driving home from a party he had been picked up by the police and taken before the magistrate for speeding. Friends had advised him to plead guilty and pay the fine rather than waste time defending himself. So Bing went along with money in his wallet, thinking the whole thing would be over quickly.

But the judge wasn't as susceptible to Bing's charm as most people.

"Is it true you were under the influence of liquor, as the arresting officer reports?" he asked coldly.

"Quite true," said Bing amiably.

"Are you familiar with the 18th Amendment?" pursued the judge.

"Only remotely," said Bing.

"You have 30 days to familiarise yourself with it," said the judge.

Though the studio exerted all its influence, Bing had to serve the full term. He was allowed a couple of days to make a [illegible]

Continued on Page 53

CONTINUED

A wife, a manager and a son turned Crosby into a solid citizen

featuring the *Rhythm Boys*. But his solo went to another vocalist.

The *Rhythm Boys* parted company with Whiteman after the completion of *The King Of Jazz*, and joined up with Gus Arnheim's orchestra at the Cocoanut Grove. Bing, who up to now had been a hot singer, turned to more sentimental numbers. This was the year of *I Surrender, Dear*. He began to be a favourite in his own right—not just one of a trio.

But the wild life continued. He spent money "faster than he made it." He missed shows because of long weekends at Palm Springs and Agua Caliente, two costly resorts and race centres. He was constantly in debt.

In Hollywood, Bing had made the acquaintance of a pretty actress called Dixie Lee, who had a bright future as a musical screen star. They fell in love—Dixie against all the advice of her friends, and her own better judgment. When she continued to see him, her studio took a long look into the Crosby background—and came up with the news that he'd once been jailed in Portland for not paying his bill at a Chinese restaurant, and that a truancy report on Harry Lillis Crosby in the Board of Education files carried the note: "Boy's mother came for him and promised to keep him out of trouble."

But Dixie was in love. Though he was broke and jobless, she married him late in 1930, in spite of the advice of her boss, Sol Wurtzel, who warned her, "If you marry this Crosby character, you'll have to support him all your life."

The only smart thing, in a financial sense, that Bing had done so far was to ask his brother Everett to manage him. But Everett had an uphill job—first, to get Bing to fulfil the commitments he made and then, to stop him spending the salary before he earned it.

Soon after Bing and Dixie were married, Everett talked Jack Kapp, of Decca Recordings, into letting Bing record 12 sides at about £50 a side. Today collectors willing pay over £10 for one pressing of these records.

Everett also got him a contract with the Columbia Broadcasting Network—which Bing nearly ruined for himself by playing golf in the rain and losing his voice for some days. Bing was ready to cancel the whole thing, but Everett talked him into it.

That was the real beginning. The day after his first broadcast, Bing was a national sensation. Fan letters poured into the studio. Theatres and nightclubs were clamouring for him. He played 20 consecutive weeks at the Paramount Theatre, in New York. Film offers began to come in—beginning with a series of musical shorts for Mack Sennett, each based on a popular song. Bing was astonished to find that anyone liked to watch him on the screen, for he had never had any illusions of his matinee-idol possibilities, even before Paul Whiteman had told him, "With those ears and that backside, I doubt whether you'll ever get anywhere."

But surprisingly, the fans liked the look of him as much as they had liked the sound. He went on to star in *The Big Broadcast*, *College Humor*, *Too Much Harmony*. His fan mail soared to 7000 letters a week. And curiously, although the money rolled in more freely than ever, Bing began to stop spending it like water. At last he was beginning to realise his responsibilities, for which, as he is perfectly ready to admit, he owes his thanks to Dixie and Everett.

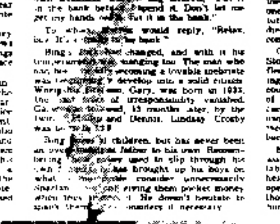
Dixie, not long after their marriage, had issued an ultimatum. Bing must cut down his gambling and drinking or she would divorce him. Meanwhile Everett was straightening out the financial tangle that Bing had made of his affairs and endeavouring to keep some of his earnings from being squandered. In his worst days, Bing, in order to get ready cash, had sold shares in himself to a dozen [illegible], whose fees and percentages were eating up all he made. Everett's first act was to buy these men off for a sum of about £10,000. The agents, who at [illegible] had little faith in Crosby's success, [illegible] the money willingly and regarded [illegible] bargain. Their subsequent opinion [illegible] recorded.

As his earnings [illegible] Bing, knowing his own weakness, [illegible] beg Everett, "Put it in the bank before I spend it. Don't let me get my hands on it. Put it in the bank."

To which Everett would reply, "Relax, boy. It's already in the bank."

Bing's habits had changed, and with it his temperament was changing too. The man who had been [illegible] becoming a lovable inebriate was beginning to develop into a solid citizen. When his first son, Gary, was born in 1933, the last traces of irresponsibility vanished. Gary was followed, 13 months later, by the twins, Phillip and Dennis. Lindsay Crosby was born in 1938.

Bing loves his children, but has never been an over-indulgent father to his own. Remembering how money used to slip through his own fingers, he has brought up his boys on what some people consider unnecessarily Spartan lines, not giving them pocket money which they haven't earned. He doesn't hesitate to spank them [illegible] if necessary.



Crosby as a clown at a premiere and as the part that won him an Oscar (Going My Way) and made him a No. 1 star.

There has only been one major crisis with the boys. When they were all at school, the headmaster told Bing that his sons, with the exception of Lindsay, were throwing their weight around with the other kids, on the general theory that "our dad has money and we can do what we like." Bing took each boy aside and laid down the law in no uncertain manner. Gary, the eldest, got it first, then the twins. Finally, Bing called Lindsay in. Although he hadn't been an offender, Bing thought it was anyway a good opportunity for a fatherly homily on the sin of false pride.

Lindsay listened for a while. But he's evidently inherited his dad's talent for breaking up an over-sentimental scene with a wisecrack. Before Bing's lecture was finished, Lindsay said, "I know, Pop, I know. But all I said was that Uncle Sam gets most of your money and your relatives get the rest."

Actually, a number of Bing's relatives are on his payroll—but they earn their money. Everett is his business manager. Larry is his public relations man; their father acted as treasurer until his death two years ago. Bob Crosby has his own band and a big TV show but he's handled by Bing's talent agency.

Being the world's favourite troubadour is only one of Bing's activities nowadays. He's concerned in manufacturing things as far separated as mouse-traps and aeroplane parts. He has the biggest income of any Hollywood star. He owns houses in Hollywood and Pebble Beach, a 25,000-acre ranch in Nevada and a lease of a cattle-breeding ranch in California. He is part owner of three professional baseball teams and a football team. He owns radio stations, a good slice of Decca Recordings, and a share in a great many more businesses that he himself could not name offhand. The great Crosby Building in Los Angeles co-ordinates his enterprises.

It's got to the stage, says Bob Hope, where Crosby doesn't even pay income tax any more but just rings up the Government and asks them what they need.

Bing deprecates the legend that he has the Midas touch. "I can lose money like anyone else," he says. "I've invested in a lot of turkeys—including a turkey farm. They all died." But his losses have been unimportant compared with his profits.

One of his earliest ventures was the Binglin Stock Farm, for the breeding of fine horse-flesh. Crosby quit active participation in racing circles several years ago, thus making countless comedians seek new jokes. In spite of all the gags, Bing's horses often did well, even in the days when he was active as an owner, especially at Del Mar, Where the Turf meets the Surf, of which track Bing was chief backer and majority shareholder.

Even in this venture, on which his friends assured him he would lose his shirt, the fabulous Crosby luck (or is it shrewdness?) held good. Del Mar, a small, beautiful track, opened in 1937. The California Racing Board thought so little of its chances of drawing good horses and good crowds that it gave the meeting only a 17-day franchise. In those 17 days the tote took more than £900,000 and the track showed a clear profit of almost the same amount after expenses and taxes.

The following year, Bing and a few associates invested £100,000 in improvements alone. From then on until the war closed racing operations, Del Mar was another Crosby gold mine. In 1946 he sold his interest in it for £200,000.

When the war started and Del Mar's buildings lay idle, Bing—and this is a little-known fact—determined to use its facilities for the war effort. He and an engineer who was one of the partners in Del Mar offered it to the government as a war plant. The track was turned into a factory producing aeroplane parts. Bing and his partner took only the actual cost from the government—"We want no profits at all from the war boom," said Crosby. Bing and his partners saved the US taxpayers more than £100,000 in this plant.

Bing's own war effort was prodigious, though it was never publicised like the entertainment tours of many other stars. He criss-crossed the States hundreds of times, making personal appearances in army camps and singing at Bond rallies. When American troops were fighting in the Philippines, General MacArthur cabled Washington to have Crosby do a special program to raise the men's morale. Bing regards this as the greatest compliment he ever received.

He went overseas, and made an extensive tour of the European theatre of the war. There he received his nick-name, Der Bingle, which has stuck ever since, almost ousting his previous sobriquet, the great groaner. Bing did some broadcasts from the BBC to Germany, and it was the Germans who called him *Der Bingle*.

A song for Londoners

Once, when he was in London, a large crowd of fans assembled outside his hotel. Bing came to the window and sang *Pennies From Heaven*. "That gesture did more for Transatlantic relations than all the speeches in the world," said a London newspaper. "Thanks, Bing."

Meeting Bing, however, many people are inclined to think him a casual—far too casual—singer who [illegible] of the breaks and dislikes personal contact with strangers, even members of the Press who want to talk to him. It is hard for newspaper or magazine writers to get an interview with him. For any information about him—private or business—enquirers are always referred to his

With his wife, the former actress, Dixie Lee, at a rare meeting in 1946. For some years, the gossips have talked of strained relations—and threatened divorce.

Young Crosby's giant business investments is a $250,000 [illegible] in the Pittsburgh Pirates, a pro. baseball team.

Friendly rivalry with Bob Hope and [illegible] is part of the Crosby legend. They [illegible] in Los Angeles.

The Crosbys, father and sons, on their Nevada station. During the holidays, the boys Gary, Phillip, Lindsay and Dennis work as farmhands.

[illegible] and [illegible] world affairs. [illegible] affairs—a wise [illegible] how much [illegible] have talked them-[illegible]

[illegible] Presidential [illegible] did get close enough to Bing [illegible] ask who he thought would win.

"Who's running?" was Crosby's only reply.

Bing is polite and pleasant to everyone he meets, but, curiously, avoids close friendships. "There's a moat around Crosby," said one of his fellow-workers, and another put it this way: "One way not to be close to Bing is to try to be." His best friends are conceded to be Bob Hope, songwriters Johnny Burke and Jimmy van Heusen, radio script-writer Bill Morrow, and little Barney Dean, his gag-man, errand boy and general factotum.

As he avoids close intimacy, so he avoids the casual contacts of social life. There's no open house sign on his dressing-room door. During lunch breaks on the set, the gregarious Bob Hope is surrounded by people. But Crosby shuts himself in his dressing-room, where he eats lunch alone and fills in his time dictating letters into a recorder. He and Dixie don't do the nightclub circuit, or attend premieres. They rarely go to big functions—in fact, it is said that Bing has only ever been to two: both testimonial dinners for himself, which he couldn't well avoid.

Even when Bob Hope was being given a testimonial dinner, Bing failed to attend, although he was scheduled as one of the speakers. "He didn't even send a transcription," said Bob. Bing's defence was that, "Bob knows what I feel about him without speeches." But Hope was hurt, all the same, and since then their friendship has not been as close as it was.

Crosby, though not sensitive about his baldness, hates being photographed by candid cameramen. He refuses to wear his toupee except before the movie cameras, but finds it a convenient way of refusing to be photographed on the rare occasions when he makes a public appearance of a social nature.

"Skip it, fellows," he says. "Haven't got my hairpiece on. Studio orders, you know."

Baldness doesn't worry him

But if a picture is taken, Bing doesn't worry about his fans seeing his bald head. He has never been vain about his personal appearance and from his earliest days refused to have his jug-handle ears taped back to the side of his head.

Over the 22 years of their marriage, there have been persistent rumors of domestic trouble in the Crosby menage. They've had their quarrels, like any married couple, but their marriage has only twice been seriously threatened. The first time was in the first few months of their life together, when Dixie objected to Bing's happy-go-lucky attitude to his work. The second occurred a couple of years ago, when Bing's far-too-serious attitude to his work kept him too much away from Dixie. The boys were growing up, and away at school, and Dixie suddenly realised that she saw very little of her husband. The problem of "too much work" was one which, in 1930, she'd never have believed she would have to face! For a few months, there were persistent rumors of a legal separation—Bing, as a devout Catholic, would never consider a divorce. Both Bing and Dixie denied the rumors.

Evidently the trouble was not as serious as gossip would have it. The Crosbys are seen together much more. The entire family spent last Christmas together, and it seems to have been a reunion in every sense of the word.

When the boys were small, Bing let them appear with him in a few short films, mostly trailers for coming pictures. But after a while, he refused to let them do any more. "They were turning into a bunch of hams," he explains. If they want to go into show business, they can, says Bing, but he insists that they go through college first. The eldest, Gary, has made a couple of records with his father, which have been extremely popular. When he has finished college, it seems likely that he will follow in father's footsteps. He has a pleasing, true voice and seems to have inherited Bing's "throw-it-away" style.

With all the big-time singers and comedians won over to television, Crosby seemed to be the only one to hold out. He once refused $25,000 for one hour's work on TV, telling

Continued next page

(CROSBY LP'S AVAILABLE IN THE USA)

Crosby, who got the Germans' nickname Der Bingle, looked like it when he sang for Allied troops in France during a 1944 tour.

Everett, who had sung him from New York to relay the other to 'talk about it again in 1955.' His interest in TV seemed to be confined to acquiring stations.

But in June of this year, Bing made his television debut—free. Together with Bob Hope and Dorothy Lamour, he donated his services for a mammoth TV show to raise funds for the American Olympic Team. Bing sang and quipped his way through a gruelling show lasting 14 hours, and was still singing well at the end. It was a marathon effort—an "telethon" as he and Hope called it. More than a million dollars (1,445,000) was promised by people who saw the show.

But Bing rarely ever refuses an appeal for a charity that he approves and as much as 33 pc of his income goes to charity. There's always something on Bing's list—a new library for Gonzaga University, a new organ for a Catholic church, or financial help for old friends who haven't done as well as he has on the road to success.

Since his Oscar winning performance as a priest in Going My Way, appeals for his help from the church have been much increased. As Larry Crosby remarked, "I never realised there were so many churches needing financial support until Bing made that movie."

Then there is the Crosby Research Foundation to test new inventions, and if they justify it, give help and support to the inventors. This is one Crosby enterprise that never pays its way—but then, Bing says it wasn't meant to.

No one has ever heard of millionaire Crosby retiring from films or radio. In spite of his fortune he has so many calls on his money that he couldn't afford to. "Bing's always behind the eight-ball on taxes," says Larry. "If he quit working tomorrow—the way he and Dixie and the boys live—he'd be broke in six months."

"If I were financially independent, which I'm not, I'd quit," says Bing. "And I'll quit anyway when I begin slipping. I believe in what George M. Cohan once told me: 'Don't stay too long—leave while they're still applauding!'"

They're still applauding. The Groaner's popularity hasn't waned since he was named in a US poll in 1945 as the most popular man in the world. There seems to be no reason why he should ever quit if he doesn't want to. #

August [illegible]

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Crosby Classics - Vol 2	Capitol SM 11739	$3.98
Crosby Classics - Vol 3	Capitol SM 11740	$3.98
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Best of Christmas - Vol 2	Capitol SM 11834	$3.98
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Bing Crosby In Hollywood	Columbia C 2L 43	$9.98
Bing Crosby Story Vol 1	CSP CE2E - 201	12.95
Paul Whiteman	Columbia CL 2830	$5.30
Harry Lillis Crosby	Columbia SP PR 14369	
Bing Crosby Collection - Vol 1 ('28-32)	Columbia C-35093	$4.95
Bing Crosby Collection - Vol 2 ('32-34)	Columbia C-35094	$4.95
Original Radio Broadcast	Golden Age 5023	$4.98
Feels Good Feels Right	London PS 679	
Shillelaghs & Shamrock	MCA 177	$3.98
When Irish Eyes Are Smiling	MCA 319	$3.98
Jolson Story (Pt. 1)	MCA 2057	
Bing Sings The Great Songs (Import)	MCA MCFM 2721	$7.95
Bing & Company (Import)	MCA 2775	$7.95
Bing's Greatest Hits	MCA 3031	
Best Of Bing	MCA 2 - 4045	$7.95
Mr. Crosby and Mr. Mercer (Import)	MCA Coral CDLM 8025	$7.95
Happy Prince	MCA 15017	$3.98
Christmas Sing With Bing Around The World	MCA 15018	$3.98
That Christmas Feeling	MCA 15019	$3.98
Merry Christmas	MCA 15024	$3.98
When Radio Was King	Memorabilia 705	$5.95
"The Special Magic Of Bing Crosby" (Import)	MGM Select 2353-101	$8.45
Seasons	Polydor 1-6128	
Dick Tracey In B Flat	Scarce Rarities 5504	$6.95
On The Air w/ P. O'Brien/V. Borge+1930-31	Spokane 1	$6.50
Kraft Music Hall w/P. O'Brien/V. Borge+	Spokane 2	$6.50
Kraft Music Hall w/S. Haywood/V. Borge+	Spokane 3	$6.50
Kraft Music Hall w/R. Reagan/V. Borge+	Spokane 4	$6.50
Der Bingle - 1943	Spokane 5	$6.50
Happy Holiday with Bing Crosby	Spokane 6	$6.50
Kraft Music Hall 1937	Spokane 7	$6.50
Sing You Sinners - 1940	Spokane 8	$6.50
Birth Of The Blues w/D. Shore/R. Nichols+	Spokane 9	$6.50
Der Bingle - Vol 2	Spokane 10	$6.50
Kraft Music Hall - 1942	Spokane 11	$6.50
Bing In the Thirties	Spokane 12	$6.50
Kraft Music Hall - 1942	Spokane 13	$6.50
Bing In the Thirties - Vol 2	Spokane 14	$6.50
"Holiday Inn"/"Bell of St. Mary's"	Spokane 15	$6.50
Hey Jude/Hey Bing	Springboard 4008	$5.95
Dinah Shore 1947/Bing Crosby 1952	Sunbeam 308	$6.50
Distinctively Bing Vol 1	Sunbeam 502	$6.50
Distinctively Bing Vol 2	Sunbeam 504	$6.50

Bing is Back	Totem 1002	$6 50
Bing Crosby & Al Jolson	Totem 1003	$6 50
Lux Radio Theater - 11-8-37	Totem 1004	$6 50
Bing & Al 1949-50	Totem 1007	$6 50
On The Air 8-18-37	Totem 1008	$6 50
Bing Bob and Jody 1950-51	Totem 1009	$6.50
Bing 'N' Al (Vol 3) 1949-50	Totem 1013	$5 50
Bing 'N' Al (Vol 4) 1947	Totem 1015	
Bing 'N' Al (Vol 4) 1947	Totem 1016	$5 50
Bing In The Hall	Spokane 17	$6 50
Bing & Al - 1947 1948	Totem 1017	$6 50
On the Air - 1937	Totem 1022	$6 50
On the Air Vol IV	Totem 1030	$6 50
That's What Life's All About	United Artists UA-LA 554-G	
Bing Crosby With Fred Astaire " A Couple of Song & Dance Men"	United Artists UA-LA 556-G	
12 Hits Of Christmas	United Artists UA-LA 699-H	
Fancy Meeting You Here	Victor AFll-1854	
Legendary Performer	Victor CPLl-2085	$7 95
Many Happy Returns (Import)	Vocalion 1	$5 95
Sings	Vocalion 73603	$3 98
Sings Magic w/Peggy Lee (Import)	Magic 1	$8 50

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CROSBY ALARM CLOCK FOR RAFFLE
(See page 20)

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BITS 'N' PIECES
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* Tapes for sale - Jonathan Russell, 10 Roxburgh Road, Westgate-on-sea, Kent CT8 8RX, England has tapes of Bing's Philco and Chesterfield shows for sale. We have details of the content (guest stars, etc) and can supply it for you. Write direct to Jonathan (who also has Bing's G.E. Shows as well!)

* Bing recently made a brief appearance on a city cinema screen. The Silver Screen Cinema in Manchester Unity Arcade featured 'Crooners Holiday', a cut down version of Bing's 1931 Mack Sennett short 'Dream House' as support to 'The Secret Policeman's Ball'.

* Thomas's Records in the Southern Cross hotel have set aside a special area of the store under the title of "78's from Nevin Walker". Thomas's have been selling old discs for some time for Nevin since he took ill last year and they certainly deserve your support.

* Speaking of old records, there's another shop in the city that caters for 78 collectors. Although it seems to specialize mainly in classical records, I believe that they will be getting pop discs in as well. "The 78 Record Collectors Shop" is at 338 Flinders St, Melbourne and open 10.30 to 6.00 Monday to Friday and 10 to 1 on Saturdays. Phone 62 2124 for details.

* For more up-to-date records, Club members get a discount from two Melbourne record shops. Just mention that you're a member, at: Cunningham's Record Centre, 80 Church St, Brighton, or, The Bentleigh Sewing and Record Centre, 348 Centre Rd, Bentleigh. The last mentioned is also a good place to try for all import nostalgia LP's including those listed on page 17.

* Not too much of Bing has cropped up on videocassette in this country, but the other day I did notice in Reilly Bishop in the city a tape featuring three of Bing's 1931 Mack Sennett shorts and a Perry Como TV show from the mid-1950's. Surpising that there is so little of Bing available on video here.

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KEEPING TIME WITH BING

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Back on page eighteenyou can see reproduced an alarm clock which carries a rather familiar dial on its dial. (Sorry!) This clock was supplied by one Michael Yzaguirre, 580 Flatbush Avenue, Suite 2F, Brooklyn, NY 11225, USA and we have actually obtained one to raffle at our next meeting on May 18th The cost of the clock is US$15.00 plus US$5.00 air mail to Australia. Michael informs me that he also has a battery clock at US$100 and a watch at US$30, both large and small models.

Watches, clocks etc are also available, for those who are interested,with such faces as Marilyn Monroe, Elvis Presley, Shirley Temple, Bette Davis, John Wayne, etc.

I'd suggest that you write to Michael for details.

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V-DISCS - A HISTORY AND DISCOGRAPHY

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(Vern Taylor of Portland, Oregon sends us details of a new book of interest to collectors.The following comes from the official publicity release.)

V-Discs were a unique series of phonograph records produced by the U.S. military for distribution to service people during and after World War 2. More than eight million records - featuring the very best in jazz, popular and classical music - were sent free to military personnel throughout the world. These unusual recordings included specially made records by top performers, some of whom played together on V-Discs for the first and only time, as well as transcribed radio broadcasts, film soundtracks, and unissued commercial records. (Bing included. BM)

'V-DISCS' is an exhaustive survey of every facet of this unique programme and the great recordings it produced. Contents include War time and post-war time phases, Sources, Recording, Master and Serial Numbers, Production, Navy and

Marine Corps V-Discs and miscellaneous series, EP and LP records - - - and much much more.

Author of this incredible book is Richard S. Sears, a geologist with a major oil company who compiled the book over a 15 year period.

Cost, at US $67.50, may be the only damper to the whole affair, but the V-Disc collector cannot afford to be without this book.

For details, write to the publishers:
Greenwood Press, PO Box 5007, Westport, Ct. 06881, USA.

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INTERVIEW WITH AL RINKER
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(Well-known American Crosby man Vern Taylor of Portland Oregon held two conversations with Al Rinker, last surviving member of the Rhythm Boys, on February 2nd and 5th of 1979. These conversations resulted in Rinker appearingas special guest of the Bing Crosby Historical Society at their first annual meeting in May that same year. Following are selected extracts from those conversations which appear by kind permission of Vern Taylor.)

VT: I'm affiliated with the Bing Crosby Historical Society up here in Tacoma and several of us got together yesterday and talked about the hope that we could get you as a keynote speaker on the fifth of May.

AR: Well, that might be kind of tough for me because of the situation here. You see, I'm in the process of finishing a book. I haven't had it published yet and I've just finished writing it. It's my recollections of my early life with Bing and the young Bing Crosby. We were together all the time since I was 16 years old.

VT: Yeah, we're looking forward to that I can tell you.

AR: My sister Mildred Bailey is in it too. Everything I'm telling actually happened. I'm not trying to make it a gossip thing or touch it up the way it didn't happen. We've got Paul Whiteman and all the great

jazz artists - Beiderbecke, Venuti, Traumbaur and all those guys.

VT: Did you ever know a guy named Burt McMurtrie?

AR: Yes, very well. He was on the Old Gold show with us as the producer and he was a friend of my sisters.

VT: He's a wonderful man although he's been sick lately. (Burt McMurtrie has since passed away. BM)

AR: Do you know what I'm doing right now?

VT: Outside of writing that book, no.

AR: I'm watching the Bing Crosby Tournament.

VT: (LAUGHS) Well I'll be darned!

AR: (RETURNING TO SUBJECT OF HISTORICAL SOCIETY MEETING) When is this thing going to be?

VT: May fifth.

AR: Well let me think it over and depending on the circumstances here I'll see.

VT: Well, we want to hear from you because you were one of those guys right at the beginning and we didn't hear much about you until recently and that was unfair.

AR: That's because I've been away from show business for a long time. I've been writing and working with advertising agency people.

VT: You were behind the scenes you see and those of us who are interested in Crosby's earliest days have a great interest in you because you were there.

AR: Yeah I can understand how you fellas feel about it but you should know that there are certain things about him that I don't feel friendly about.

VT: We know that too. Surely, the guy was no angel.

AR: It has nothing to do with his talent. He was cold in certain ways and his relationship with his four boys is a good indication of what I'm talking about. But that's beside the point for what you fellas are out there for.

(Concluded on page 25.)

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COLLECTOR'S
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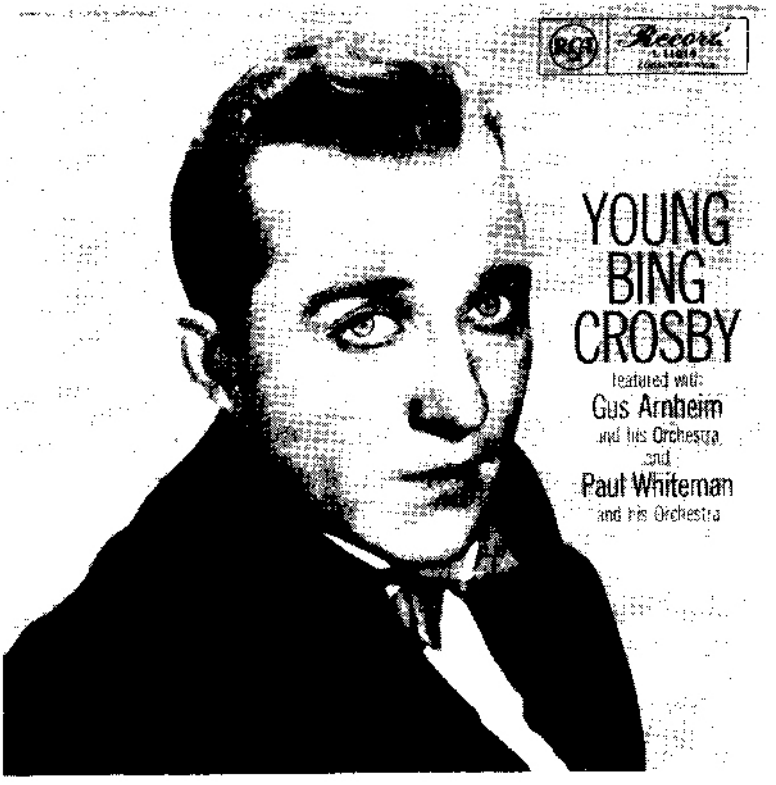
"YOUNG BING CROSBY"

Two covers from rare LP's feature in Collector's Corner this issue. The first comes from the late 1950's and features material from the late 20's and early 30's. The cover features a startling colour photo of Bing from the period - surely one of the earliest in existance!



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CORNER
******

"SAY ONE FOR ME" - Soundtrack LP

Our second rare LP cover comes from Bing's movie "Say One For Me" made in 1959. The movie was not exactly a great hit for Bing and consequently the record is very scarce.

(Vern Taylor interview from p. 22)

VT: Sure, this is a question of finding out what Al Rinker and Bing were doing when they left and how they got started.

(A few days later, Al Rinker rang back with good news for Vern and the BCHS.)

AR: I've talked with my agent and he felt that it would be important for me to be there.

VT: The Bing Crosby Society in the person of Ken Twiss will send you a complete prospectus on the objectives and aims of the organization.

AR: Is the meeting going to be held at a hotel?

VT: There's a large hall in Tacoma that holds about 600 people. They think they're going to have about 500 attend.

AR: Oh really?

VT: Yes, they're advertising in national magazines and local magazines and newspapers in major cities on the west coast.

(Vern and Al then discuss details of the meeting and the question of the formality of the proceedings comes up. The answer is 'very informal')

AR: I like the fact that it won't be a formal thing. I'm no formal speaker. If I'm in an informal crowd, then I can really let myself go, and talk.

VT: Wonderful. That's just what we want.

AR: Did you ever have a picture of the band that we had at the casino theatre in 1924 with Bing playing drums and me at the piano and my brother playing saxophone?

VT: No I don't.

AR: Well, no-one's got that picture. There's only one picture in the world like that. I'll bring it with me.

VT: We'll look forward to seeing you. Thanks very much Al.

END. (And thank <u>you</u> Vern)

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MORE BITS 'N' PIECES

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* TACOMA SOUVENIR DISCS - Now available

Thanks to Ken Twiss, we now have 25 copies (less those already reserved by members) of the 1981 Tacoma disc for sale. Cost of the disc is $4.00. Track 1 features a radio version of "Where the Turf meets the surf"; Track 2 features the song "Beware" which was cut from Bing's 1940 movie "Rhythm on the River" before it was released. Tracks 3 and 4 are taken from Kraft radio shows of the 30's and are "Blue Orchids" and "The Man with the mandolin" respectively. The bulk of the discs will be sold at our meeting on May 18th although a few will be reserved for mail orders. WRITE NOW IF YOU WISH TO RESERVE A COPY. (Members reserving copies are David Duncan, Ken Henderson, Betty Harrison and Keith Dorman.) Sorry, limit is one disc per membership.

* Other Crosby Societies around the world:

The Bing Crosby Historical Society, PO Box 8013, Tacoma Washington 98408 USA. Write to Ken Twiss.

Club Crosby, PO Box 8232. Sacramento, California 95818 USA. Write to Alston Sutton.

Kathryn Crosby Fan Club, 1374 Broady, #7D, West Somervill MA 02144, USA. Caroline Dawson is President.

International Crosby Circle, 7 Greenmeadow Close, CWMBRAN Gwent NP 44 4PJ, England Contact Reg Bristo.

The Bing Crosby Photo and Tape Club, 32 Ferndale Avenue, Wallsend, Tyne & Wear, NEW 28 7NE, England. Frank Murphy is the man to write to.

* An enterprising Englishman named John Marshall has just issued a 45 EP featuring four songs written and performed by himself, and all to do with Bing. The disc is available direct from John and costs One pound 50 p plus postage. John's address: 39 Kings Rd, Teddington, Middlesex, England. The disc makes interesting listening and is a worthwhile addition to your collection.

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NEW RECORD RELEASES

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Sweet Memories of Bing - MCA (Japan) VIM-9521-2(M)

Once again, Japan has come out with an excellent set of Bing's Decca material. "Sweet Memories" contains 32 Crosby tracks ranging mostly from the late 1930's to the early 1950's. Many of the tracks have never appeared on

LP before, or if they have, on long-deleted records. These include ColePorter's "I Love You", "Ive Found a New Baby", "Row Row Row", ""Where my Caravan has rested" (with Jascha Heifetz) and "It's a lonely Trail".

Write to our Japanese member KyoichiMuneta, 1-19-21 Nakakosaka, Higashi-Osaka 577, Japan if you want a copy and he may be able to help you.

Robin and the 7 Hoods - Reprise (Japan) P-10860R. Mentioned this one a few months ago but now we have the catalogue number for those who want it.

Bing - The Final Chapter - BBC Records - REB 398
This unique disc features Bing's very last recordings, made for a BBC radio programme just 4 days before his death. The LP also features extracts from interviews with Bing and others and part of a rare 1944 radio show for the BBC featuring Bing and Anne Shelton. This disc (or cassette) is available in Melbourne, imported. Cost is about $10.00 and several shops have it.

Star Spangled Rhythm - Sandy Hook - SH 2045
The soundtrack of the World War II Flag Waver with Bing as one of the guest stars.

Joe Venuti - Hot Swing Fiddler - Sandy Hook - SH 2047
Features radio tracks taken from the early 1950's from Venuti's appearances on Bing's radio shows.

Bing Sings Again - Readers Digest Records (USA)
Seems like two years since we first heard about this set and now it is finally released! (Not here yet though.) This 9 LP set features material taken from most of Bing's record companies over the years plus many radio broadcasts. If you want a copy now, ask a friend in the USA to send it.

Great Singers of the 30's - Fanfare LP 40-140
Contains the complete Woodbury show from May 28, 1934.

Singalong with Bing - Campfire singalong 1003
This unusual disc, just reissued, features Bing's vocals from one of his early 60's singalong LP's but substitutes the recorded chorus with one supplied by the campfire girls of America. A curiosity well worth having.

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FROM OUT OF THE PAST
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The Melody Maker, July 1930 (Continued from last issue)

'KING OF JAZZ' (review)

But to return to the beginning again. Henry Busse plays his own composition, "Hot Lips", as a trumpet solo, which is not particularly outstanding. Then a close-up of Eddie Lang and Joe Venuti. This, from our point of view, is far and away the best minute of the whole film. To say that it is wonderful is ridiculously inadequate. Chester Hazlett then produces some of his marvellous sub-tone clarinet playing, which was not helped by reproduction. To those who have the thrill of hearing Hazlett on records, this part will be distinctly disappointing.

The opening 6/8 movement of "Caprice Viennois" is dragged in to provide material for some very fine sextette fiddle playing, which is photographed from all angles. Later on, we see some spasmodic closeups of Roy Bargy playing "Rhapsody in Blue" (on a five-octave piano!) and that, so far as the band is concerned, is the lot, except for the momentary solo appearances in "Bench in the Park".

Of course, they play throughout the film, and appear in several gorgeous settings, but the reproduction does not do the band justice,or, perhaps they are unused to accompanying. Anyway, apart from these isolated spots, one feels that the work could have been done equally as well by one of our star combinations, playing from the same masterly orchestrations.

The work of Traumbaur (except for a few bars), Venuti (except for the item mentioned), and the other famous hot stars of Whiteman's band, is practically unnoticeable. All the hot fans who have been breathlessly awaiting an hour-and-a-half's worship of these stars will be terribly disappointed.

Obviously, of course, commercial requirements had to be the prime consideration, but I do think that these wonder players could have been used a great deal more.

The orchestrations by Ferde Grofe are in keeping with the general pretentiousness of the production - full of colour and variety. The beautiful tone of the strings and the clever treatment of celeste and vibraphone accompaniments are particularly worthy of note.

Halfway through the film we have a scene by the famous Rhythm Boys, which is all too short. One gag of theirs appealed to me enormously. They are singing perfectly straight, in the style of a certain very famous quartet. Suddenly one of them remarks "Who are these Revellers?" To which another replies, "Oh, just some quartette on the air - it really doesn't matter!" and off they go into their inimitable hot rhythm. They sing better than they look. (The Revellers, for the uniniated, were indeed a very popular group of the time, and although American, they enjoyed great success in England. BM)

One of the high spots of the film is Gershwin's "Rhapsody In Blue". Gorgeously produced and using no less (I am told) than sixteen shades of blue, a gigantic property piano out of which the band rises and which is played (?) by four pianists, the whole thing misses fire from a musical viewpoint by the introduction of extraneous dancing and stage effects.

There is a particularly annoying individual (BING!!!) who introduces it with a clarinet which he does not play.

The remainder (and major part) of the film is devoted to quick-fire sketches and song scenes, some funny, some not so funny. With these, we as dance music critics, are not concerned. To sum up, a film which is unique in sumptiousness, one which must not be missed on any account by musicians, who must be content with the small crumbs supplied for their especial delectation. Hail Hollywood!

END

Yes, "King of JAzz' was certainly a remarkable film as those who attended our 1978 "premierre" of the film can attest. The print is still available for hire if anyone is interested to do so. And that's it for this newsletter. I hope to see you on May 18th for another Crosby Milestone.

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